

University Museums and Natural Science Collections

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Museums of leading universities store rich and unique biological and natural history science collections which have been produced various important research outcomes and providing rich sources for the world of archival science community.

Recent development of technology makes it possible to extract from new and even from very old specimens valuable novel information within and beyond the scope of their original collecting purposes. Extraction of DNA data from new and old collection specimens is a good example and DNA databases are widely in use. Another example is collection based study on global environmental changes. Here, old specimens' unique role should be emphasized.

They are only sources providing data about bio-geographic distributions, climatic as well as environmental proxies of the past which enable elucidating global issues we are now confronting. These data should also be organized into database available worldwide.

Current effort to collect specimens in the present should be promoted; we may need to reconstruct the condition of the earth of the year 2112 in future. Because we do not fully exploit information contained within specimens, we should keep them until we invent ideas and techniques to extract information from them.

The above discussions clearly indicate collections of university museums and related archives are complementary to each other. Therefore Archival researchers should also be aware of the importance to making efforts in collecting specimens, taking care of them, intensifying research on specimens, making and taking care of effective archival information on collections and promoting its wider and frequent use.

Another and very important role of museums located in universities is incubating next generation of collection based researchers as well as bringing Archival researchers and database users, who are non-specialists, with basic literacy about collection related biological and natural science.

To intensify these above activities of university museums, we now started with our colleagues in museums of Association of Pacific Rim Universities (APRU) to an international cooperation project named 'University museum Collection Network as the Core of Frontier Research